ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.
ED001034	NA	NA

4. AUTHOR(S):
N.A.

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED:
Great Cities School Improvement Program School-Community Co-Ordinating Team: Indications of Growth

6. PUBLICATION TITLE:
N.A.

7. EDITOR(S):
N.A.

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN
ORG. Great Cities School Improvement Program
ST. Philadelphia, Penn.
CITY, STATE

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE
Great Cities School Improvement Program
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
N.A.	N.A.	Nov. 62	2

TELE. EXT.
INST/LOC CODE

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TYPE OF REPORT
PROPOSAL ☐
IN-PROGRESS ☐
FINAL ☐
FOLLOW-UP ☐

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR
survey

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)

growth indication	questionnaires	Great Cities	
poverty programs	parent involvement	student growth	
community projects	student attitudes		

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

To determine the effectiveness of the Great Cities School Program in Philadelphia, a program designed to reduce the effects of experiential deprivation among children of limited backgrounds, four types of evaluative criteria were used in this study and are reported as follows:

1) Standardized Testing: The results after two years were compared with normally expected growth of students of this type. Scores in reading, spelling, arithmetic fundamentals and arithmetic problems were compared in twenty-one instances. Some superiority of gain was found. The slight increase was taken as a positive sign for the program.

2) Non-standardized Testing in the field of reading showed a growth of 1.15 over normal.

3) Teacher judgements based on appraisal of daily work and testing indicated definite growth and improvement in student attitude and competition.

4) Questionnaires were given to pupils and parents as well as to teachers. All schools reported increase in pupil interest, better behavior, better work habits, and improved attitudes in peer relationships, self-image, and aspirational levels. Parent cooperation, parent involvement in school and community and parent commitment to the project have been increased through efforts of volunteer school-community coordinators.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION

20. DIVISION OR DEPT.

21. CONTRACT NO.

PROJECT NO.

22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT

23. DURATION OF PROJECT

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Office of Education

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GREAT CITIES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATING TEAM
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

INDICATIONS OF GROWTH

One of the basic assumptions of the School-Community Co-ordinating Team Project was that, for the child of limited background, academic achievement levels could be raised by providing a program designed to reduce the effects of experiential deprivation. To determine the effectiveness of the on-going program, four types of evaluative criteria were used: standardized testing materials, non-standardized testing, teacher judgments, and questionnaires.

Standardized Testing

Our Division of Educational Research conducted a comparative study of achievement based on standardized test scores attained over a two-year period. The study used scores in Reading, Spelling, Arithmetic Fundamentals, and Arithmetic Problem Tests. The schools used were the three elementary schools which had been in the Project for two years. There were seven comparisons for each school, or a total of twenty-one for the three. The amount of growth evident in each comparison was matched against the normally expected amount of growth by pupils in schools of this type. Of the twenty-one instances of comparison, twelve represented superiority of gain above expectation, three represented gain equal to that expected, and six represented inferiority of gain. In the areas of Project concentration (language arts) in twelve instances of comparison, eight showed superiority of gain, one showed expected gain, and only three showed inferiority of gain. The Division of Research felt that results of all of their studies showed "some superiority of gain over what might be normally expected.... The fact that there was gain, however slight, seems to indicate that the program used in these schools during the past two years has apparently effected some academic growth."

Non-Standardized Testing

The non-standardized testing was largely in the field of reading where the group informal reading inventory was used both for diagnostic and evaluative purposes. In schools where the average child was reading two years below city norms by the time he reached sixth grade, we saw, after two years in the Project, an average growth of 2.31 book levels. (We considered two book levels a year average growth.)

Teacher Judgments

Teachers based their judgments upon their appraisal of daily class work and the results of their own testing programs. In general, teachers agreed that there had been definite growth in the mastery of basic skills. They also reported attitudinal changes reflected in an increased willingness to undertake academic assignments and a greater tendency to carry them through to completion.

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Questionnaires

In several schools questionnaires were given to pupils and parents as well as the teachers. All schools reported an increase in the pupils' interest in reading and books. Teachers generally reported better work habits and more positive attitudes toward school with more pupils willing to assume leadership roles. Principals reported fewer behavioral problems referred to them or to the counselor and less defacing of school property and equipment. They also reported improved behavior in yards, corridors, and on stairways. Parents reported noting an improvement in the home. Both parents and teachers indicated noticing improved attitudes in peer relationships, self-image, and aspirational levels. Although much work still needs to be done in this area, attitudinal changes in the children have been significantly encouraging, so that both teachers and parents have indicated strong desires that the program continue. Most important in marshaling parent co-operation, parent involvement in school and community, and parent commitment to the purposes of our Project have been the school-community co-ordinators. Without those lay workers, community forces would never have played the active role that they have in the Project.

The best indication to date that our Project seems headed in the right direction has been the stated desire of both our Superintendent of Schools and the President of our School Board that the Project not only continue, but be extended.

November 1, 1962